

**To:** Dhieux, Joyel[Dhieux.Joyel@epa.gov]  
**From:** Johnson, Tom  
**Sent:** Fri 8/14/2015 11:52:24 PM  
**Subject:** FW: East Mesa/Twin Rock/Animas Assessment

**From:** Waylon Denny [mailto:waylon.denny@bia.gov]  
**Sent:** Friday, August 14, 2015 11:42 AM  
**To:** Johnson, Tom <tojohns@southernute-nsn.gov>; Gurule, Kathi <kgurule@southernute-nsn.gov>; Hartenstine, Curtis <charten@southernute-nsn.gov>; Friedley, Jim <Jim.Friedley@bia.gov>  
**Subject:** East Mesa/Twin Rock/Animas Assessment

The purpose of this assessment was to evaluate site conditions at the following locations: **East Mesa/Twin Rock/Animas Irrigation System(s).**

The evaluation team consisted of Waylon Denny (BIA), Tami Sheridan (Southern Ute Tribe), Chris Taylor (USCG), and Dave Romero (EPA). The initial assessment began at 8:30am, August 13th, 2015.

**East Mesa Ditch** at the diversion headwaters. Gates at this station were closed when the initial slug of mine waste material flowed past and adjacent to the diversion area. In the morning, there was light observable impacts/staining/sediment deposition observed on the sidewalls upstream of the diversion. Since the gates were closed during the major part of the event and not opened until Sunday afternoon, no observable impacts were noticed downstream of the headwaters. The group walked downstream approx. half mile to confirm this initial evaluation. This site was also visited again later in the afternoon to evening, and the staining on the banks of the diversion ditch was more visible. BIA requested sediment samples be taken at both above the diversion and in the south ditch. Split-composite sediment samples were taken by the EPA contractor and by La Plata County water quality technicians.



**Twin Rocks diversion** channel lie south and further downstream of East Mountain close to the New Mexico–Colorado state border. To the best of everyones knowledge these diversion gates were left open at the time the event occurred and water was allowed to flow back into the Animas River further downstream. Thick vegetation made assessment difficult but continuous flushing has occurred since the incident. As a result of this continuous flushing only minimal impacts were observed further downstream as the channel was reintroduced to the Animas River. BIA requested sediment samples at this location. BIA requested sediment samples be taken at both above the diversion and in the south ditch. Split-composite sediment samples were taken by the EPA contractor and by La Plata County water quality technicians.



**Animas Ditch Diversion** channel gates were partially left open at the time of the event only because these locks could not be fully closed. Light to moderate impacts/staining/sediment deposition were observed on the sidewalls of the ditch with a very fine film of discoloration/sediment deposition. At present this channel to the second diversion point are being flushed resulting in only minor impacts further downstream before being reintroduced back into the Animas River. BIA requested sediment samples be taken at both above the diversion and in the south ditch. Split-composite sediment samples were taken by the EPA contractor and by La Plata County water quality technicians.



**Recommendations:** Pending results of the composite-split sediment samples at these locations, it is my recommendation to continue to pass water through the irrigation ditches in order to allow any standing sedimentary accumulation the chance to enter back into the river ecosystem.

Waylon J. Denny

Regional Division Chief, Division of Environmental, Safety, and Cultural Resources  
Management

Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)

Southwest Regional Office

1001 Indian School Road, NW.

Albuquerque, NM 87104.

Telephone: (505) 563- 3423

Cell Phone: (505) 350- 0229

Telefax: (505) 563- 3062

E-mail: waylon.denny@bia.gov

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